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ABSTRACT

This handbook describes the mission of each of the 10 Regional Educational Laboratories in the U.S. The laboratories ensure that those involved in educational improvement at the local, state, and regional levels have access to the best available information from research and practice, thus guaranteeing that lessons about school reform that are developed at one site can be applied elsewhere. The book explores the laboratories' key initiatives and ongoing work, including the individual "signature programs" that each lab has developed that have made a difference in education. It also provides examples of recent, high-quality materials selected from the many publications and products available from each lab and offers a preview of each lab's Web site. The labs that are featured include the Northeast and Islands Laboratory at Brown University; the Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success; the Appalachia Educational Laboratory; the Southeastern Regional Vision for Education; the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory; the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory; the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory; the WestEd Laboratory; the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory; and the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning Laboratory. There is also contact information both for the laboratories and for program officers of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (RJM)

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Profiles of the Regional Educational Laboratories

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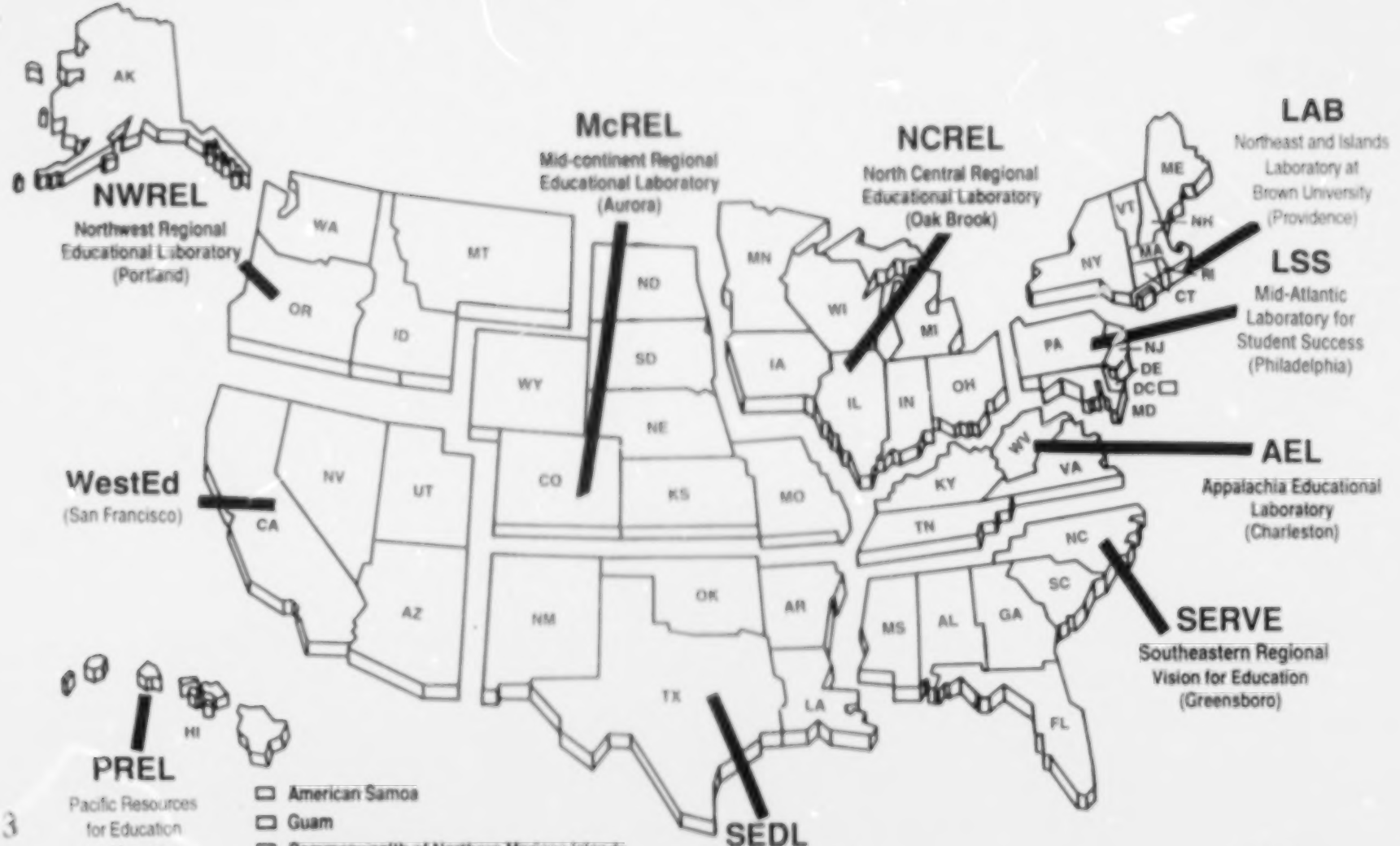
Regional Educational Laboratory Map



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Profiles of the Regional Educational Laboratories

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Foreword

If you are an educator facing the difficult challenges of school improvement, or if you are a teacher, parent, or community member interested in knowing what research says about successful educational reform, we hope you take advantage of the services and information available through your Regional Educational Laboratory.

The network of 10 Regional Educational Laboratories, serving geographic regions that span the nation, works to ensure that those involved in educational improvement at the local, state, and regional levels have access to the best available information from research and practice. The Regional Laboratories are the U.S. Department of Education's largest research and development investment designed to help educators, policymakers, and communities improve schools and help all students attain their full potential. Administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), the Laboratories work to ensure that lessons about school reform developed or learned in one site can be appropriately applied elsewhere and that everyone involved in educational improvement will have access to the best available research, knowledge from practice, and exemplary and promising programs.

This handbook describes each Laboratory's mission; key initiatives and ongoing work; individual "signature programs" that each Lab has developed over a period of time that have made a difference in the field; a few examples of recent, high-quality materials selected from the many publications and products available from each Lab; and a preview of each Lab's Web site. We also have provided information on how to contact the Laboratory nearest you or the OERI program officer for that Laboratory.

Background on the Regional Educational Laboratory Program

Congress initiated the Lab Program in 1965 as part of the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which addressed the educational system's failure to provide all students with high-quality instruction and achieve high levels of performance. The Act provided financial support for school districts and states for additional staff, educational materials and resources, and capacity building. It also created a system of Regional Laboratories to develop and disseminate—in cooperation with schools, state education agencies, and research universities—ideas and programs for improving educational practices throughout the country. In 1994, the Regional Laboratory Program was reauthorized (Public Law 103-227) with the mission "to promote knowledge-based school improvement to help all students meet high standards and to help the nation meet the National Education Goals."

Laboratories Serve Their Regions

While each Laboratory has distinctive features tailored to meet the special needs of the geographic region it serves, the Laboratories also have common characteristics. Guided by a governing board representing stakeholders in its region—educators, business leaders, state officials, and community members—each Laboratory's work is shaped by the concerns, issues, opportunities, and special attributes of its regions. As experts in educational research and development and experienced agents of change, the Laboratories:

- Create powerful new tools and knowledge—better strategies, innovative programs for improving school practice—that are developed and tested in real-world settings.

- Provide direct assistance—in vision-building and planning, training and staff development, coaching, and ongoing technical support—to help school leadership teams and policymakers risk setbacks and advance school change.

- Get research-based knowledge to those who need it, in forms they can use—from highly readable print publications to seminars and forums to electronic "dialogue"—to solve real problems.

- Link schools with each other and the larger community, fostering alliances, helping educators become networked in ways that overcome isolation, pool talents and resources, and foster continuous learning.

Laboratories Serve the Nation

- The Regional Laboratories also work both individually and as a network, using their knowledge, experience, and expertise to develop and deliver products and services that benefit educators nationally. Over the last several years, the Regional Laboratories succeeded at:

- Producing tools for use across the nation, such as the *Catalog of School Reform Models*, which provides information about models for schools to consider, and *Making Good Choices*, which helps schools conduct needs assessment and make informed decisions about which reform model is best suited to their needs.

- Developing a database that is an authoritative source of information on Comprehensive School Reform and that is being used by the Department and researchers to carry out evaluations of this important new federal initiative.

- Engineering and implementing—in collaboration with the U.S. Secretary of Education—a nationwide initiative, the *National Awards Program for Model Professional Development*, which identifies and recognizes exemplary local professional development programs.

- Supporting the Department of Education's America Reads Challenge by conducting 16 regional tutor training conferences around the country and subcontracting with 61 tutoring partnerships, providing technical assistance and research for these activities. The partnerships included colleges or universities collaborating with local educational agencies, America Reads/Read*Write*Now sites, community literacy organizations, and AmeriCorp/VISTA programs and other Corporation for National Service programs engaged in improving students' reading. This work culminated in a review of effective and promising practices in volunteer reading tutoring programs entitled *So That Every Child Can Read*.

- Improving educational opportunities and outcomes for homeless children and youth in our nation's school communities through the establishment of the National Center for Homeless Education, which provides linkages to resources to help local communities across the nation respond more effectively to the educational needs of homeless children.

- Working to ensure that those involved in educational improvement at the local, state, and regional levels have access to the best available information from research and practice through a Laboratory Network Website (http://www.relnetwork.org).

In addition, each Laboratory brings particular expertise in specialty areas, making that expertise widely and readily available to all schools and communities throughout the nation. This enables Laboratories to provide leadership and act as an expert resource both within their respective regions and to the Laboratory network.

For more information about the Regional Educational Laboratory Program, contact either:

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LAB at Brown

SEARCH

Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University

About the LAB
Our work
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- Standards
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- Secondary schools
- Leadership
- Information Center
- Policy Center
- State Liaisons
- vLAB Technology

Our people
Our specialty area

Jobs at the LAB
Publications

of Success

Exemplary programs in bilingual education

Check out this project of the LAB's specialty area

Electronic Collaboration

This practical guide for educators is now available.

The Regional Educational Laboratories Network works to ensure that those involved in educational improvement have access to the best available information from research and practice.

Comprehensive School Reform:

Grants to school districts, to pursue comprehensive school reforms.
View our list of relevant resources.

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States Served: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands

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Mission

To improve teaching and learning and advance systemic school improvement by increasing capacity for reform and forming strategic alliances with key members of the region's education and policy-making community. One of the ways in which the LAB puts these strategies into effect is by conducting its research in collaboration with educational practitioners and community members. Knowledge gained through inquiries into standards and assessment, school services, professional development, and community involvement is exchanged with policymakers and schools through publications, computer media, and LAB-facilitated workshops. The LAB views excellence and equity as two equally important guiding principles, and places special emphasis on developing effective approaches for meeting the educational needs of linguistically and culturally diverse student populations.

Key Initiatives

Urban School Reform. Current partnerships with the Boston, Bridgeport, New York City, and Providence school districts have focused on improving the quality of education for all urban students by using a variety of research and technical assistance techniques and strategies to assist all stakeholders in urban school reform. This initiative creates interactions that connect research with practice and provides opportunities for dialogue to encourage thoughtful reflection on system policies and procedures that affect student outcomes. The initiative's work with urban educators has long-term value and immediate use, influencing policy and practice within these urban school systems.

Professional Development for Educational Leadership. The goal of the Professional Development for Educational Leadership initiative is to build the capacity of administrators, teachers, and educational stakeholders to play a leading role in collaborative, research-based education reform and to learn to reflect on their actions. Through collaborative inquiry, initiative staff invites a variety of stakeholders to see themselves as leaders. By encouraging a multitude of people to envision themselves as education leaders engaged in research, reflection, and collaboration, the initiative promotes the development of new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and systems.

School Change and Community Involvement. To address the issues of larger system reform, this LAB initiative is designed to identify ways to effect and sustain systemic changes at the school building, district, and state levels in order to improve student performance. With its focus on the context for the classroom, the initiative encourages coordination among all levels of the system—

the school building, district, community, higher education, state agency—to improve outcomes for all students. For example, work under this initiative examines strategies that state departments of education can use to lead reform effectively and ways to engage parents and community members in support of reform.

Secondary School Restructuring. The Secondary School Restructuring initiative identifies actions that high schools, districts, states, and education associations can take to transform themselves into high performing, relevant, rigorous, and continuously improving educational systems for the 21st century. The initiative explores systemic school reform through strategic entry points that have the potential to have an impact on practice and considers how curricular, instructional, organizational, funding, and policy practices affect equity in education.

Standards, Assessment, and Instruction. The Standards, Assessment, and Instruction initiative focuses on research, development, and assistance that addresses core issues associated with the implementation of education reform in the region. In particular, this initiative concentrates on the implications of reform for linguistically diverse student populations. The LAB's work has evolved through partnerships with both state education agencies and local districts that are committed to utilizing research-based approaches and best practices in order to address major issues associated with achieving excellence and equity for all students.

Signature Programs

Implementing Standards with English Language Learners. This work draws on knowledge of standards and education reform and the latest research on second language acquisition and effective school practices with English language learners. In the Lowell School District in Massachusetts, LAB staff work as researchers and professional development advisors alongside content area, bilingual, and ESL teachers from four urban middle schools and district-level Title I and VII facilitators. This program explores an area into which there has been little existing research and minimal understanding in the field: how professional development can support the implementation of standards in classrooms that include English language learners. Work has focused on three sustainable professional development strategies examination of student work, peer visitations, standards analysis all related to standards implementation at the classroom level. Qualitative data analysis yielded findings that show which kinds of professional development, outside facilitation, colleague-to-colleague collaboration, and policies are needed to support standards implementation with diverse student populations.

Indicators of Capacity: Readiness for Reform in High-Poverty Elementary Schools. LAB staff studied six high-poverty schools that are using Title I funds and that have been recognized for their achievement. Structural practices and processes that over an 8- to 10-year period led to changes in outcomes in the six schools studied were examined. The study used focus groups, interviews, and document reviews to learn which strategies the schools shared. Findings showed, for example, that the power of teacher efficacy, often spreading from a core group of faculty to a critical mass, was a common feature of successful turnaround schools. This project's research has proven to be a fruitful starting place for addressing a variety of needs posed by local school districts. Because the project's research demonstrated the promise of schoolwide projects and the importance of decentralized decisionmaking and teaming, the New York City deputy chancellor's office has used the project's findings to serve as the basis for a design for site-based management for the city.

Strengthening the Accreditation Process. The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), aware of the LAB's commitment to secondary school restructuring, sought assistance in improving the quality of instruction offered in each of the 700 high schools that comprise the NEASC Commission on Public Secondary Schools. As a result, the LAB has conducted research into accreditation practices that will have significant results both regionally and nationally. In collaboration with the commission, the LAB engaged a national panel of experts to review new accreditation standards and then suggested revisions to the visit methodology being considered by the NEASC commission. Recently, a set of seven self-assessment guides was co-produced by NEASC and the LAB.

Specialty Area

Language and Cultural Diversity. The LAB's mission in its specialty area is to increase the capacity of administrators, teachers, and educational stakeholders to use research and best practice when working with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For example, the Institute on Language and Cultural Diversity, one of the LAB's specialty area projects, has initiated research-based inquiry into diversity at the district and school levels through action research. The institute's action research teams share what they learn, both with each other (electronically, through an action research listserv) and with other interested educators across the region. The LAB's efforts in the area of language and cultural diversity cut across its major initiatives and include work dealing with standards and assessment, professional development, urban reform, and school change; as a result, each LAB project and initiative asks, "How will this approach or strategy affect students from many different language and cultural backgrounds?" The LAB is one of three laboratories providing leadership in the Laboratory Networking Program's work on cultural and linguistic diversity.

Selected Recent Products

Implementing Standards with English Language Learners: Initial Findings from Four Middle Schools. This research offprint presents the preliminary findings of the LAB's work in Lowell, Massachusetts, with teachers who are part of an intensive professional development program (see project description above).

A Guide to Involving English Language Learners in School to Career Initiatives. This guidebook provides suggestions for increasing and improving English language learners' involvement in school-to-career initiatives across the country. It describes model career initiatives that include these students and analyzes some of the school restructuring issues raised by the research conducted for this book.

Ñanduti. This Web site resource for parents, teachers, and administrators provides up-to-date information on early-start and long-sequence foreign language programs. Ñanduti provides practical, easy-to-use materials, resources, and techniques applicable to K-8 instruction. The site is accessible at http://www.cal.org/earlylang.

School Matters: Mapping for Reflecting and Planning. This activity guide provides guidelines for a school's discussion of its history in relation to reform initiatives. Though the product outlines a process that takes only a few hours, the discussion it begins can stimulate a school community to reflect on its history and context for reform.

Themes in Education: Block Scheduling. The second in the LAB's *Themes in Education Series*, this reader-friendly booklet provides an overview of block scheduling, the different schedule options it provides, and some of its advantages and potential disadvantages. Included are case studies of schools in the LAB's region that are using block scheduling.

Laboratory for Student Success

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory at Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education

The Laboratory for Student Success (LSS) is one of ten Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U. S. Department of Education. The overarching goal of the LSS is to strengthen the capacity of the mid-Atlantic region--which includes Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington DC--to enact and sustain lasting systemic educational reform through collaborative programs of applied research and development and services to the field. In particular, LSS seeks to achieve high academic standards in urban schools in the mid-Atlantic region and nationally through a comprehensive program of urban education enhancement.

About the Laboratory	Publications
Research & Development	Events
Comprehensive School Reform	Resources
Services to the Field	What's New
Community for Learning	America Reads
Urban Education	Advanced Technologies for Learning

Search the LSS Website

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Mission

To build capacity to bring about lasting improvements in the learning of the mid-Atlantic region's increasingly diverse student population. The ultimate goal of the LSS is to establish a system of research, development, and dissemination that connects schools, parents, community agencies, professional groups, and higher education institutions; gradually expands reform efforts in the region; and is part of a high-tech national system for exchanging information.

Key Initiatives

Guided by the overarching mission of finding ways to achieve academic success for each student in the mid-Atlantic region—as well as in urban communities throughout the nation—the LSS aims to achieve what has in the past proven to be a difficult task: transforming research-based knowledge into useful tools that can be integrated into the educational reform process. Accordingly, the interdisciplinary team of LSS researchers and field-based professionals are engaged in a 5-year program of work that includes three broad-based initiatives:

A field-based development and applied research initiative that focuses on: (1) building a procedural knowledge-base for identifying, developing, and implementing effective practices and policies that foster educational resilience and learning success for children and youth in the mid-Atlantic region, particularly those who live in isolated rural areas and inner-city communities; (2) identifying and studying ways to enhance institutional capacities that provide a coherent and coordinated system of delivery in efforts to connect schools, families, and the community in systemic ways in the service of healthy development and educational success of children and youth; and (3) developing knowledge-based products and communication processes that educators and related service providers can apply in their efforts to improve student outcomes and establish and sustain successful reform.

A program of outreach and services to the field that serves as a regional resource that facilitates and enhances the capacity of the mid-Atlantic region for achieving student success. The LSS Services to the Field initiative includes three major components: (1) collecting and disseminating knowledge-based information and products on effective and promising practices and policies for grassroots educational services to professionals, policymakers, parents, students, and the general public, using multiple outreach strategies and tools; (2) providing sustained client-based assistance to states and local school districts to implement systemic improvements through an integrated series of professional development and technical assistance programs; and (3) establishing and sustaining collaborative demonstrations of whole-school reform.

Forging strategic alliances and learning communities to expand the LSS outreach capacity for servicing the needs of the field by building on the resources and expertise of regional and national professional organizations, state education agencies, local school districts and schools, colleges and universities, and other cultural and education agencies. This initiative has resulted in the establishment of the Mid-Atlantic Network of Superintendents and Deans; a series of national invitational conferences on emerging issues and next-step plans co-sponsored by the LSS and a variety of educational and related services agencies at state and national levels; and collaborative studies with state education agencies and local schools in building the procedural knowledge base on how to implement what works in achieving student success.

Signature Programs

The *Community for Learning (CFL)* program is a whole-school reform model that connects the school, the family, and the community to implement a coordinated approach to achieve student success. At the core of CFL is an integrated design framework that emphasizes the implementation of a powerful instructional program and a collaborative process that links the resources and expertise of schools with other learning environments, including homes, churches, libraries, public-and private-sector workplaces, and postsecondary institutions. Education programs conducted in these environments are coordinated with those of various government agencies, such as health and social services, housing, and law enforcement. These programs are connected with community revitalization efforts to create a broad-based commitment to improve learning and competence of children and youth and the adults who serve them—in short, a Community for Learning.

20/20 Analysis for Instructional Planning is a planning tool for developing an integrative service delivery strategy that focuses on ensuring that students who show the least and most progress on significant outcome variables receive intensive instruction and related service support. The 20/20 Analysis provides school staff with an analytic procedure for identifying students most in need of special help within a given class, school, or district. By identifying students in the lowest and highest 20th percentiles in selected student outcome areas (e.g., achievement in specific subject matter areas, attendance, discipline referrals), school staff are able to pinpoint those students for whom the existing instructional and related service program delivery is least effective, and determine ways to refine and adapt present practice and policies to meet students' individual needs.

The *LSS National Invitational Conference Series* is a forum for addressing emerging issues of national importance and formulating next-step solutions. A major goal of the LSS National Invitational Conference Series is to cull from research and practical knowledge on what works and what does not work to significantly improve this nation's capacity to achieve healthy development and educational success of children and families. A major outcome of the series is the opportunity to exchange information and viewpoints mutually beneficial to the design and implementation of classroom practice, research priorities, and identify pressing technical assistance and professional development needs.

The *Effects of School Reform on Educational Improvement* program examines the implementation and effects of comprehensive approaches to improving teaching and learning in schools with a high concentration of students from economically and educationally disadvantaged circumstances. The twofold goal of the program is to: (1) develop a national database on program features, implementation requirements, and outcomes of Title I schoolwide programs that informs policymakers and practitioners on what works; and (2) provide information and assistance to states, districts, and local schools to develop, implement, and maintain a high degree of implementation of schoolwide programs that are effective in achieving student success.

The *LSS Model for Professional Development and Implementation of School Reform* is a continuous process of learning from and building on diverse expertise and strategies for achieving student success. The goal of the LSS Professional Development program is to disseminate knowledge and practical applications drawn from the best and most promising research and innovative develop-

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ment efforts to the widest possible audience in the mid-Atlantic region and nationally using multiple outreach strategies and tools.

The *Analysis of Family, Community, and School Characteristics and Their Impact on Student Achievement* program is designed to gain an understanding of the processes leading to the concentration of low-income and minority students into schools characterized by high rates of poverty. This research program focuses on improving the capacity of urban schools to achieve education success of students placed in economically disadvantaged circumstances.

The *School-Family Partnerships to Enhance Academic Achievement and Social Competence in Urban Children* program develops and implements strategies and produces materials that will enhance two-way communication between parents and teachers and increase parent involvement both in home and school learning activities. The program encourages parents and teachers to work together to promote children's academic and social competence.

Specialty Area

Urban Education. The LSS Urban Education Enhancement Program serves as a national resource for improving the capacity for healthy development and education of children and youth in our nation's urban communities. This program includes four major projects: (1) establishing collaborative demonstrations of whole-school reform led by local schools; (2) conducting studies of effective Title I schoolwide projects; (3) providing professional development and technical assistance to assist urban school districts in designing, implementing, and evaluating knowledge-based reforms; and (4) providing a national information dissemination program on what works in improving urban schools. The dissemination program includes national invitational conferences, discussion forums, and the distribution of information and products through print, electronic media and professional organizations, and technical assistance provider agencies.

Selected Recent Products

Achieving Student Success: A Handbook of Widely Implemented Research-based Educational Reform Models is a decisionmaking tool for schools and school districts interested in implementing comprehensive school reform. This is also an interactive online tool that is available at http://www.reformhandbook-LSS.org. (1998).

Resilience Across Contexts: Family, Work, Culture, and Community (in press, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers) addresses the ways to improve practices and policies that promote resilience development of children and families faced with some of the most challenging life circumstances (1999).

Education in Cities: School Choice vs. Best Systems (in press, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers) provides an overview of research and practical applications of innovative school reforms being implemented across the nation (1999-2000).

The *LSS Spotlight on Student Success Series* is a two-page research brief series that provides a summary of research findings based on the work of LSS researchers. Current titles address science standards and their implications for teacher education; the association of African-American mothers' perceptions of their neighborhood with their parenting and adolescent adjustment; and *Laying the groundwork for a new generation of policy research: Commentary on "Knowledge utilization in educational policy and politics."*

The *LSS Partnerships Series* contains practical guides for parents and teachers to encourage positive parent-teacher relationships. Current titles include: *Building healthy homework habits* and *Building girls' interest and achievement in science and math.*

Community for Learning Video Series and *Community for Learning: Building on Diversity.*

AEL Linking the knowledge from research with the wisdom from practice to improve teaching and learning

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AEL Harnesses New Leadership
Executive Director Allen Arnold charts a new course.

Things We Did Last Summer
Here's a recap of selected AEL headlines from the past few months.

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Find out how your nonprofit organization can apply for funding.

What's happening in Interdisciplinary Teamed Instruction? Check out the September issue of the ITI Review.

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Share your favorite ideas and Web sites with other teachers.

Squashing the Millennium Bug
Tune in to an interactive teleconference to see if your school is ready for Y2K.

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Mission

To link the knowledge from research with the wisdom from practice to improve teaching and learning. This is accomplished by working with educators, researchers, policymakers, business leaders, families, students, and others to discover, develop, evaluate, and disseminate innovative services, products, and practices.

Key Initiatives

CSRD Facilitation and Evaluation Services. AEL has developed meaningful partnerships centered around schoolwide reform issues with state departments of education, professional organizations, and institutions of higher learning as the Laboratory provides in-depth technical assistance to schools and districts as they apply for CSRD funding. In an attempt to build capacity for problem solving and continuous improvement within schools, AEL offers a 2-year, intensive learning experience to individuals helping to guide schools through a comprehensive reform process. This External Facilitators Academy provides schools with the expert, impartial assistance they need to ensure successful implementation of local programs. In addition, AEL and the Center for Research in Educational Policy at the University of Memphis have developed and are offering to local schools an inexpensive Formative Evaluation Package for School Improvement (FEPSI®) that will help inform and steer the implementation of comprehensive reform efforts.

Kentucky Writing Project. The Kentucky Department of Education is collaborating with AEL to conduct a 5-year applied research and development project to design professional development for writing portfolio improvement. Project staff have used qualitative and quantitative measures to identify school conditions and practices linked to consistent writing improvement. During phase one of the project, researchers developed 7 instruments, conducted 29 school site visits, and interviewed more than 100 teachers, 200 students, and 50 administrators. Analysis of this data revealed 33 indicators for improving schools. During phase two, the research team conducted pilot and field tests of a schoolwide self-study process for improving writing instruction. The field test has determined the most effective process model to recommend for statewide implementation in the fall of 1999. An external facilitator training package is being developed to use with Kentucky educators, who will assist selected schools to use the schoolwide writing process.

Promoting High Academic Performance for Under-served Students. This work involves two projects, both in Tennessee districts that serve large percentages of ethnic minorities. In a Memphis middle school, a 2 ½-year humanities project titled "African-Americans as History Makers" will develop, teach, and evaluate an interdisciplinary humanities curriculum. The project is building depth of knowledge through a scholars program, implementing interdisciplinary teamed instruction, and providing training in technology. In the second project, AEL staff are working in one

district with central office and building level staff with faculty from the University of Memphis to improve mathematics instruction. This 3-year project is designed to build an infrastructure for change, investigate the affects of the learning process, and provide technical assistance to the K-8 mathematics teaching community.

Quest. Learning the "hows" and "whys" of continuous improvement and how readily communities can implement school improvement is the goal of elementary and high schools participating in this research project with AEL. Quest schools are not looking to import any specific program to fix today's problems. Rather, they are reaching out to form a "community of learners" that sets a clear school vision, studies and discusses ideas from current literature and their own experiences, fosters habits of collaboration and thoughtfulness, and promotes an environment for increasing student learning. Quest's framework for continuous school improvement, which guides and unifies the work of the elementary and secondary school networks, derives from the research literature on education change, school improvement, school effectiveness, and the field of business.

Teaching and Learning Mapping Strategy. This 2-year process for professional development and curriculum reform works alone or as part of a schoolwide reform program. It assists schools and districts by: (1) aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment with state standards and test objectives; (2) increasing understanding of results-oriented teaching; and (3) improving communication among teachers across and between grade levels and courses. As teachers map what they are teaching, they also identify the standards addressed in each instructional unit, describe learning activities that illustrate how they teach, and explain how they assess student mastery of standards. The strategy enables teachers to identify potential areas for integration and reinforcement of learning across the curriculum. An external facilitator is a key component of the strategy. Throughout the 2 years, the facilitator works with teachers and administrators to guide them through implementation of the process and assist with mastery of new skills.

Signature Programs

Family Connections. This parent-tested, teacher-approved tool not only helps families and young children have fun together while learning, it also enables schools to boost parent involvement. The learning guides are either sent home weekly with children or delivered to the home by family educators. Each issue offers a brief, easy-to-read message for parents and a read-aloud selection for parents and children, along with do-at-home activities. Two 30-issue sets of colorful four-page guides are available. *Family Connections 1* is for families of preschool children, and *Family Connections 2* is for families of kindergarten and early primary children. A Spanish version also is available. To date, more than 100,000 sets (30 guides each) have been purchased by programs from Maine to Hawaii.

Interdisciplinary Teamed Instruction. A research-based strategy for curriculum integration, this interdisciplinary approach to instruction focuses on dissolving boundaries between disciplines of knowledge, students and teachers, and schools and communities. The professional development program includes publications to help understand the "whats," "whys," and "how-tos" of curriculum integration; on-site training and weeklong institutes that focus on team building and curriculum development; and action research to evaluate the effects of integration on teaching and learning. A moderated electronic listserv provides subscribers with a forum for sharing questions, insights, resources, and experiences.

The KERA Study. AEL's qualitative policy study of the implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 began in that same year. The first 5 years focused on implementation of critical aspects of the law. Current research looks at the conditions under which KERA changes educator behaviors and studies the effects of those changes on students by following the class of 2006 for 3 years at six elementary schools across the state. A related study, sponsored by the Partnership for Kentucky Schools, is looking at professional development needs and ways to meet them.

QUILT. A long-term professional development program, QUILT is designed to increase student learning and thinking by improving teacher use of classroom questioning techniques. QUILT—Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking—represents a comprehensive approach to enhancing student engagement in learning. The program helps teachers create a classroom environment that is more reflective, student centered, inquiry based, and metacognitive. In QUILT classrooms, students understand how questioning and answering can help them learn, use effective questioning themselves, and become more actively involved in their learning.

Specialty Area

AEL's *Rural Education Specialty* supports the integrity of small rural schools in an increasingly interconnected world—helping students from rural places become successful, well-adjusted adults—wherever they end up residing. The focus that guides work in this area is fostering the essential relationship of sustainable rural schools and communities, with particular emphasis on student achievement and well-being. This focus illustrates AEL's commitment to promote the integral relationship of student achievement in rural schools, particularly small rural schools, along with their communities, their environs, and their joint futures. Staff work regionally to help rural schools and communities improve school readiness of preschool children, increase student achievement, and help students find pathways to adulthood through school-to-work opportunities and appreciation of rural community life. Nationally, staff provide leadership, share expertise, establish partnerships, and inform debate through a variety of publications, teleseminars, and electronic networks, and through participation in practitioner- and research-specific analyses of the National Center for Education Statistics databases. Through its specialty area work, AEL sponsors a National Academy of Rural School Practitioners and Scholars—which operates, in part, via a moderated electronic network—to link rural schoolteachers and administrators with those who study and write about rural schools and communities.

Selected Recent Products

Expanding the Vision: New Roles for Educational Service Agencies in Rural School District Improvement explains how education service agencies can help districts set their own agendas and develop their own approaches for accomplishing their goals in the face of court decisions, global impacts on communities, and national and state pressures for reform.

Family Connections Parent Notebook makes AEL's popular learning guides, formerly distributed through school or preschool programs, available to parents. All three versions—*Family Connections 1*, *Family Connections 2*, and *Relaciones Familiares*—can be purchased individually. Each contains a set of 30 4-page guides, plus tips for using them.

The ABC's of Parent Involvement in Education: Preparing Your Child for a Lifetime of Success offers information, inspiration, ideas, and expert advice to parents with children of all ages. AEL's Family Connections staff partnered with the National Parents' Day Coalition to create this handbook designed to raise awareness of, energize, and empower parents with ideas on ways they can be involved in their children's education.

"School-Based Programs to Promote Safety and Civility," a *Policy Brief*, looks at recent studies designed to evaluate the effectiveness of antiviolence programs. The publication focuses on more than 20 primary and secondary level programs, all of which get a thumbs-up from researchers, and provides contact information for each.

"Schools for Disruptive Students: A Questionable Alternative?," a *Policy Brief*, reviews the research on alternative schools and suggests indicators policymakers can monitor to judge the effectiveness of alternative school legislation.

"Planning Schools for Rural Communities" from AEL's Rural Center is an *Information Brief* that discusses the character of a good rural community school and briefly considers the relationships among learning, community, and facility construction in rural areas.

SERVE

Improving Learning through Research and Development

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Technology in Learning
DISC | Southeast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR*TEC)

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SERVE is associated with the School of Education, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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The SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE)

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Mission

To promote and support the continuous improvement of educational opportunities for learners in the Southeast.

Key Initiatives

Low-Performing Schools. The goal of this initiative is to assist states in networking, sharing lessons learned, and identifying promising strategies for assisting low-performing schools. A regional seminar was convened by SERVE in response to the emerging emphasis on assisting schools that do not meet state accountability standards. The seminar, titled Southern Seminar on Low-Performing Schools, provided state education agency staff from each of the six states in SERVE's region the opportunity to examine progress, share effective strategies and policies, identify current needs, and consider how SERVE and other OERI-funded assistance providers can best meet their needs. These conferences have served as a type of benchmarking for participants.

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE). NCHE, established in 1998 to enhance educational opportunities and outcomes for homeless children and youth in our nation's school communities, has set the following goals:

- Disseminating important resource and referral information related to the complex issues surrounding the education of homeless children;
- Fostering collaboration among various organizations that have interest in addressing the education of homeless children;
- Promoting national grassroots awareness of homeless issues; and
- Providing linkages to resources to help local communities across the nation respond more effectively to the educational needs of homeless children, as prescribed by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act.

Cross-Organizational Initiative on Teachers and Teaching. The goal of this initiative is to provide a comprehensive organizational focus on teachers and teaching. There is an abundance of evidence that indicates that teachers have the potential to truly contribute to the reform of the educational system, in addition to having an impact on student learning. However, structural, professional, personal, political, and cultural influences affect teacher effectiveness. This initiative addresses these influences by forging connections between research and practice. Several mechanisms are utilized, including regional and national collaborative efforts; teacher dialogue

forums; alliances between college faculty, practitioners, and researchers; a network of accomplished and award-winning teacher leaders; and administrator institutes. The initiative also addresses issues related to knowledge and skill development, standards, improved professional development, pre-service education, teacher leadership, renewal, and policy development. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to promote and support the continual improvement of teachers and teaching in the Southeast for the purpose of increasing learning opportunities for students.

Signature Programs

The following six major work units of SERVE are designated as programs—led by staff who possess expertise in an area of education having high importance in the Southeast, and conduct research and development and provide technical assistance to education agencies in the region. These programs, supported by SERVE's Executive Services, Operations, Office of Publishing and Quality Assurance, and Office of Evaluation, cut across contracts and grants. The Cross-Organizational Initiative listed above also addresses a topic of high importance in the region, involves effort in most or all of these six programs, and requires intensive coordination to achieve organizational focus.

Program on Assessment, Accountability, and Standards. The goal of this program is the advancement of thinking and practice in the areas of student assessment, teacher assessment, program evaluation, and accountability. Major activities include:

- Helping teachers assess students' progress in the classroom in ways that affect achievement and motivation;
- Working with high schools to implement higher expectations for all students (e.g., through senior projects);
- Helping administrators develop teacher evaluation systems that support professional growth and accountability;
- Disseminating promising school and district approaches to improving reading;
- Building the capacity of schools and districts to conduct useful program evaluations; and
- Supporting district administrators in exploring effective strategies for raising standards for students in an era of school-based decisionmaking and more demanding state accountability models.

Program for Children, Families, and Communities. This program addresses the educational and developmental needs of learners from birth through adulthood in the context of school, home, and community in traditional and nontraditional settings and supports the work SERVE is doing in its specialty area—early childhood education. This program operates the Anchor School Project, an innovative technology project designed to support migrant farm-worker families as they move from place to place in search of agricultural work. The Region IV Comprehensive Center provides training and technical assistance to schools, school districts, and state education agencies in North and South Carolina; and the newly created National Center for Homeless Education became operational in the Fall of 1998. The program also studies special education programs serving learning-disabled students and those with attention deficit disorder in an effort to inform public and private schools about the most effective way to reach these special groups of children.

Program on Education Policy. This program addresses policy and policy development implications of local, state, regional, and national issues, problems, and initiatives in education. It serves the region through a group of senior policy analysts, one located in each state education agency (SEA). The analysts spend the majority of their time assisting chief state school officers with policy issues and facilitating communication among SERVE, the chiefs, and SEA staff. The program sponsors a regional policy network that includes educators, legislators, and others involved in assessing and setting the direction of education in the region. An annual meeting of the network is conducted to build and extend relationships and knowledge of major policy issues in the region and the nation. Policy Program staff develop policy briefs on issues of high importance to the SEAs and coordinate their work with the other programs in SERVE.

Program for the Improvement of Science and Mathematics Education (PrISME). The mission of this program is to improve science and mathematics through a focus on teaching and learning. This mission is pursued by developing and/or identifying capacity-building models of technical assistance and identifying and disseminating exemplary materials. It operates the Eisenhower Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education at SERVE for the six states in the Laboratory's region. The Consortium coordinates mathematics and science resources, disseminates exemplary mathematics and science instructional materials, and provides technical assistance for the implementation of teaching methods and assessment tools for use by elementary and secondary school students, staff, and administrators.

Program on School Development and Reform. The purpose of this program is to improve schools in the Southeast by disseminating research-based information and providing technical assistance on implementing models and processes of school reform that have shown proven impact on teaching and learning. Program staff assist state education agencies with developing plans and conducting workshops and conferences that support the scaling up of statewide comprehensive school reform initiatives. Districts and schools are offered assistance with developing comprehensive school improvement plans based on assessed needs, researching and selecting appropriate designs and strategies, and implementing a wide range of school reform models and initiatives in both urban and rural settings. Other initiatives that promote effective school change and reform throughout the region include identifying and sharing successful programs developed and implemented by states, districts, and schools; convening groups to provide opportunities for exploring choices and exchanging ideas, and working with intensive sites to test assistance processes that are helpful to schools that are implementing school reform programs. The program is part of the national collective and collaborative efforts of the Regional Educational Laboratories to disseminate school reform designs, tools, and strategies. SERVE's Charter Schools Resource Center and Leadership Institute are operated out of this program.

Program on Technology in Learning. The purpose of this program is to improve the processes of teaching and learning through the use of electronic technologies. These technologies include, but are not limited to, computers and computer-driven devices, telecommunications, and software. Program staff conduct research and development in strategies, methods, and materials and provide technical assistance and staff development to educators, parents, and others whether in schools, districts, SEAs, or other settings. The program is responsible for the operation of the Southeast and Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR*TEC) and for conducting the technology activities of the Regional Educational Laboratory for the six states in SERVE's region.

Specialty Area

Early Childhood Education. SERVE is developing its ability to provide expert leadership and support to the early childhood community nationwide. Based on the results of a national assessment SERVE conducted in conjunction with the Laboratory network and other national associations to identify critical needs, SERVE is:

- Establishing a research agenda and identifying sites for data collection and development activities in order to advance new knowledge;
- Planning for the development and dissemination of products, publications, training, and technical assistance activities to build capacity and inspire innovation;
- Establishing a resource and referral system and forming coalitions and networks to address critical issues; and
- Developing plans to influence national policy development.

SERVE's specialty area work focuses on five areas of concern for early childhood educators, caregivers, and advocates: quality care/education, linking of services, education/training for caregivers and educators, equitable access to quality care, and policy development that supports quality care and education.

SERVE will continue its work with practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and program leaders to improve the care and education of young children by conducting research and development activities, providing training and staff development, and developing and disseminating resource materials. Major activities to be initiated include convening a national conference devoted to early childhood education issues and field testing a document designed to improve the continuity of care for children and their families.

Selected Recent Products

Achieving Your Vision of Professional Development: How to Assess Your Needs and Get What You Want. This "Hot Topic" publication, awarded the 1998 Book of the Year by the National Staff Development Council, assembles the most current research on professional development and change for educators looking to accelerate their professional growth and improve student learning.

Family-Focused Workplace Guide. This early childhood publication assists businesses of all sizes and sectors in examining their current work/family policies and programs in the spirit of continuous improvement.

Teacher Evaluation: The Road to Excellence—Current Findings on Teacher Evaluation Models That Support Professional Growth. This R&D publication, which summarizes promising practices in effective teacher induction and teacher evaluation, provides the rationale for implementing formative teacher evaluation programs.

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About NCREL

Throughout the country, teachers, parents, principals, community members, policymakers, and students are working toward a common goal: improving our nation's schools to make them safe and productive places where children can learn and grow. For nearly 15 years, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory has been a partner and resource in this important endeavor.

Who We Are

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping schools -- and the students they serve--reach their full potential. We specialize in the educational applications of technology. One of ten Regional Educational Laboratories, we provide research-based resources and assistance to educators, policymakers, and communities in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. NCREL's ultimate goal is to help our clients build tools and apply proven practices to create schools where all students can develop their skills and abilities. We draw on the latest research and best practices to strengthen and support schools and communities in order to make this goal a reality.

What We Do

- Create new knowledge and tools--including strategies and programs for improving school practice--through collaborative field development and applied research efforts with schools and agencies
- Provide research-based information and direct assistance to help school leadership teams and policymakers solve real problems
- Forge strategic alliances by linking schools, agencies, and organizations with each other to help educators and policymakers become networked in ways that support ongoing learning and pool resources and talents
- Operate the Midwest Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education, which provides direct assistance to schools and districts toward the goal of meaningful, engaged learning through the systemic reform of mathematics and science education.
- Operate the North Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium, which helps schools and districts integrate technology in education in ways that lead to improved learning for all students.

Further Information About NCREL

- Employment Opportunities at NCREL

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Mission

To strengthen and support schools and communities so that all students achieve standards of educational excellence. NCREL accomplishes its mission through policy analysis, professional development, and technical assistance, and by leveraging the power of partnerships and networks.

Key Initiatives

Center for School and Community Development. This Center takes the lead on behalf of NCREL in establishing and coordinating school sites where the Laboratory can serve as an external partner. Work in this Center is directed toward developing a deep understanding of comprehensive school change, improvement, and reform. The Center has three initiatives: (1) assisting schools in continuous improvement, (2) providing leadership training and support for school administrators, and (3) supporting school/family/agency partnerships for school and community improvement.

Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum Center. The Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum Center engages in research and the identification of best practices, develops new resources for educators, and provides training and technical assistance. Examples of such efforts include technology and education research papers that study the relationship between student learning and technology use in schools and exemplary curriculum and instructional materials that offer the greatest potential for use in training and professional development.

Center for Scaling Up. The Center for Scaling Up has four fundamental initiatives, each building on the others to form a system to support effective schoolwide change and the research and development innovation process. The initiatives are: (1) contributing to the science of scaling up by building a knowledge base; (2) moving research-based school improvement information to the field; (3) disseminating and providing training and professional development products and services for educators in technology applications for teaching and learning; and (4) building regional, state, and local networks to facilitate the scaling up of educational innovation.

Evaluation and Policy Information Center. The work of the Evaluation and Policy Information Center is to assist educational practitioners and leaders in making program and policy decisions based upon empirical data. Additionally, the Center provides timely and useful information to guide NCREL's planning and decisionmaking and supports research and development efforts.

Signature Programs

Resources for Curriculum Development. This program lies at the heart of teaching and learning and encompasses two separate but closely interrelated strands: (1) engaged learning and (2) effective teaching. Through the development of tools and information resources with a particular focus on reading, writing, mathematics, and science, NCREL helps teachers and students access, organize, and analyze research-based information. Specific works related to this signature area focus on Web-based, CD-ROM, and software resources, including the *Pathways to School Improvement* Web site, which addresses critical issues dealing with curriculum, instruction, and technology use in reading; the *Engaged Learning Safari, Mathematics and Science, Literacy,* and *Learning With Technology* Web sites; *Gateway Concepts* modules in the areas of science, mathematics, writing, and inquiry; problem-based learning resources and strategies that help teachers and students successfully use interdisciplinary approaches; and the establishment of literacy research and development projects across NCREL's seven states.

Technology Applications for Learning and Scaling Up. This program directly reflects NCREL's responsibility to provide national leadership in the use of technology for education as part of its specialty area. Having determined that technology application is a central component of any discussion of school improvement, NCREL believes that its niche is creating new visions and resources for the kinds of professional development that will empower teachers and school leaders to make effective use of the massive technology infrastructure. In partnership with educators, NCREL develops professional development tools, products, and services that reflect the needs of educators in the field. Examples of works related to this signature area include the *Learning With Technology* course, the *Pathways to School Improvement* Web site components on technology and related issues, and the *Captured Wisdom* CD-ROM library.

Creating an Infrastructure for School Improvement. By creating and participating in a variety of networks that span both a range of educational agencies and the levels of personnel within them, NCREL and its partners build a broad outreach mechanism and a systematic infrastructure for identifying and reaching its constituencies. Through these networks, NCREL is able to share information, field test resources, disseminate products and services, and provide policymakers with a mutual forum for discussion. Examples of work related to this area are a variety of Comprehensive School Reform resources (print, video, and Web-based), the *Learning With Technology* course, and professional development efforts that ensure a critical link among research, policy, and practice.

Design Support for School Improvement. "Turning schools around" through comprehensive school improvement strategies reflects and extends the work of many NCREL projects. In partnership with a site, NCREL designs support that is integrated into the school's organizational structure and culture and then provides technical assistance and training that helps the site sustain change and build capacity for ongoing improvement after the partnership ends. NCREL works with districts and schools through a four-stage decision model of change that includes setting goals and assessing gaps, designing and evaluating an action plan, implementing and maintaining change, and evaluating and renewing efforts. Specific activity in this area includes work with 11 Chicago Public Schools; intensive site work in Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin; and research and development pertaining to the *Strategic Teaching and Reading Project.*

Specialty Area

As the *Technology* specialty laboratory, NCREL has taken the lead in identifying critical questions about technology utilization that are being raised by educators at every level—school and district administrators, school board members, community members, and policymakers. NCREL's work in this specialty area concentrates on three strands: (1) developing a national research agenda around research and best practice on how technologies work to enhance learning, (2) designing and developing a curriculum for training and professional development pertaining to the effective use of technology to enhance learning, and (3) developing strategies for scaling up efforts to provide information resources and training and professional development resources to constituents

throughout the region and across the nation. NCREL's National Forum on Applications of Technology Research attracted some of the country's top names in educational technology. Forum participants identified the essential research on technology utilization that should be built into a curriculum for preparing teachers to use technology as well as some of the quality professional development efforts around the country in this area.

Selected Recent Products

The *Pathways to School Improvement* Internet server provides school improvement teams and individual educators with comprehensive information and resources, including in-depth discussions of 19 key issues in school improvement, an array of multimedia resources, a self-assessment "Trip Planner," lists of important contacts, and links to other Web sites. The site also includes a discussion center where visitors can share strategies for school improvement and using the Pathways site (*http://www.ncrel.org/pathways.htm*).

NCREL's *Learning Point* is a quarterly magazine for school and district personnel that promotes the value of research-based, practice-proven reform efforts and professional development. Each issue offers tips on implementing the latest teacher-tested instructional strategies, advice on integrating technology into the curriculum toward the goal of engaged learning for all students, and research news and recommended print and electronic resources.

The *Comprehensive School Reform Series* includes a variety of print, audio, and video resources to help educators and state policymakers understand the principles of comprehensive school reform, make informed decisions regarding school improvement, and raise their awareness of the federal Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program. Products in this series include a set of overview videotapes that describe the reform models listed in the CSRD legislation; a booklet, entitled *Making Good Choices*, to help schools and districts select a reform strategy appropriate to their situation; and a combined print/audio package, entitled *Changing by Design*.

The Captured Wisdom™ Series is a collection of videotapes that takes viewers inside real classrooms where teachers are making meaningful and creative uses of technology in subjects that range from reading to geography and history to science.

Charters in Our Midst, a set of three audiotapes, a guide to frequently asked questions, and a policy booklet of current issues, is intended for policymakers involved with or considering charter schools. It also is intended for schools and districts so that they may learn from others and make solid school reform decisions.

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SEDL SOUTHWEST EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

Our Goal

To help educators, policymakers, parents and community members help children succeed.

SEDL is helping people with...

Improving Classroom Instruction

Organizing for School Improvement

Engaging the Community

Informing Education Policy

Putting Disability Research into Practice

Supporting Diversity in Language and Culture

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spotlight

- Unlocking the Future: Early Literacy, the March 1999 issue of SEDLetter, SEDL's institutional magazine, is available on-line.
- **LANGUAGE & CULTURAL DIVERSITY:** The Educator Exchange Resource Guide helps educators participate in or begin their own teacher exchange program with another country. Available in English and Spanish.

  Two new Native Education resources, Native Education Resources for the Southwestern Region and Profiles of Native Language Education Programs, are available on-line.
- **TECHNOLOGY:** Putting Technology into the Classroom: A Guide for Rural Decisionmakers is available in English and Spanish.

  SEDL also recently produced a video called Engaged Discoverers: Kids Constructing Knowledge with Technology.
- **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:** The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program provides information on implementation and evaluation of comprehensive school reform efforts.
- Other new publications, press releases, announcements, and job postings can be located via the News page.

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SEDL

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Director: Wesley A. Hoover

States Served: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

OERI Program Officer: Gil Garcia (202) 219–2144; gil_garcia@ed.gov

Mission

To find, share, and sustain effective solutions for the most urgent problems facing educational systems, practitioners, and decisionmakers in the southwestern United States. SEDL's particular emphasis is on ensuring educational equality for children and youth who live in poverty; who are Hispanic, African-American, or other minorities; or who have mental or physical exceptionalities.

Key Initiatives

SEDL's field-based research, development, and dissemination work is organized around six related goals:

- Enhancing family and community involvement in education;
- Addressing diversity: language and culture;
- Aligning and supporting policy development;
- Promoting instructional coherence;
- Applying technology to restructuring and learning; and
- Developing strategies for improving school success.

Among the range of SEDL's initiatives that address each of the above goal areas, selected projects are described below, with the exception of the goal related to diversity, language, and culture, which is described as part of SEDL's "Specialty Area."

Development of Collaborative Action Team (CAT) Process. The CAT process steers parents, educators, and community members as they learn to collaborate; identify the most pressing issues in their communities; and develop, implement, and evaluate action plans to address those issues. SEDL is working with 14 sites to develop self-sustaining teams across the southwestern region. Individual teams have developed strategies to support the continued improvement of their school districts; created systems for delivering school-based health, social, and parenting services to school campuses; and improved the quality of schooling and life for students.

Community Deliberative Dialogue and Education Policymaking. The core idea behind this project is that ongoing public support for successful local school reform and improvement is likely to occur only if there is a "fit" or coherence between education policy and the public's priorities for education. SEDL is investigating how a series of community-wide deliberative dialogues in Arkansas and Oklahoma affected the interaction among legislators and their constituents. For example,

participating policymakers reported that the dialogues helped them understand what matters to the public and helped them anticipate the public's willingness to accept policy consequences and build common ground.

Promoting Instructional Coherence. SEDL is working with teachers and administrators to explore how teachers make linkages among external mandates, curriculum, instruction, and assessment to provide quality instruction. SEDL is creating a portfolio of tools, strategies, and resources other educators can use to explore such linkages on their own, improve their instruction, and increase student learning. A related project, the Reading Coherence Initiative, focuses on prevention of early reading failure in grades K-2. SEDL has developed a conceptual framework and tools that map the cognitive requirements of learning to read to student skill levels and instructional strategies that address skill development. The Early Reading Assessment Inventory, available as a searchable database on SEDL's Web site, gives teachers information about more than 130 assessments in Spanish and English.

Applying Technology to Restructuring and Learning. Both this effort and SEDL's "Promoting Instructional Coherence" project are based on the concept that sustained reform and improvement require changes in the core of education practice—teaching and learning. Working with 150 teachers at six schools, SEDL is developing and delivering professional development, creating portfolios of tools, and providing intensive assistance to help them create and assess student-centered learning activities. In less than 1 year, all six schools have significantly raised teacher and student enthusiasm, engagement, and learning.

Creating Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement. This project focuses on the professional staff of a school and how its efforts at school improvement affect the core student-teacher relationship in the classroom. SEDL is studying the efforts of about 20 co-developers to create professional learning communities in schools throughout the region. Based on this work, SEDL is developing tools and strategies other educators can use to build professional learning communities as they address their school improvement goals.

Signature Programs

Best Start Early Childhood Program (BECP), second edition, emphasizes the development of children's skills in several areas: visual, auditory, motor, language development, vocabulary building, and early literacy. For children who speak Spanish at home, the material offers an approach to language learning that helps prepare them for the transition to English-speaking classrooms. The first edition of BECP was developed almost 30 years ago and was available commercially until 1983. This second edition of BECP is being developed through a partnership between the Harris County Department of Education, which serves school districts and education programs in and around Houston, Texas, and SEDL.

Leadership for Change Program (LFC) is grounded in years of research about the management of planned change in schools. The two-part LFC program, designed for administrators and teacher leaders, contains books, videotapes, and instruments that school leaders can use to assess staff members' concerns about a change (be it a new curriculum or scheduling plan), develop a shared vision, and guide the creation of an action plan to put that change into practice. SEDL uses LFC tools to support much of its work with schools.

Policy Information Services and Regional Policy Analysts Network has delivered SEDL's information services to state education decisionmakers since 1989. Engaging a network of key staff members from executive offices, legislatures, and state departments of education, SEDL responds to their requests for comparative and strategic information by providing policy information packets. Annually, network members meet in " networkshops" during which they explore emerging or existing education topics of their choice.

Specialty Area

SEDL's *Language and Cultural Diversity* specialty area builds on the Laboratory's decades-long experience in carrying out research and developing materials for educators—and parents—who teach children of non-English language background.

Organizing for Diversity. This project seeks to reduce the influence that cultural differences between teachers and students might have on student achievement. Based on its review of research on intercultural communications, SEDL is developing and field testing training modules in Austin, Texas, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, classrooms to help teachers understand and work with such differences.

Adapting Comprehensive School Reform Models. Across the Southwest, schools have adopted models of comprehensive school reform that have proven track records of educating minority students. Little is known, however, about the effectiveness of these models in teaching Latino English language learners. SEDL is investigating how these models are adapted in schools that serve large numbers of these students. Rich descriptions resulting from SEDL's study of these schools will be developed into products for educators, model developers, researchers, and policymakers.

SEDL also has developed other products aimed at teachers, administrators, and community members who deal with issues of diversity. Many are available from its Web site, including:

- *Public Deliberation: A Tool for Connecting School Reform and Diversity*, a review of models, resources, and contact persons for anyone interested in coordinating and holding public engagement forums around education.
- *Educator Exchange Resource Guide* for teachers and administrators interested in participating in or beginning their own teacher exchange program with another country. The guide describes critical features of exchange programs, and is available in English and Spanish.
- *Native Education Resources for the Southwestern Region: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas*, a companion to the national directory of resources, focuses on a wide range of organizations and other resources to assist educators of American Indian students in the Southwest.
- *Profiles of Native Language Education Programs: A Source Book for Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas* describes 24 native language programs and other resources in SEDL's region.

Selected Recent Products

Connecting Student Learning and Technology introduces teachers to the principles of constructivist learning theory or student-centered learning. This guide includes lesson plans that apply the principles in the classroom. It also includes suggestions on how to supplement lessons with technology using software usually found in schools.

SEDL's *Occasional Paper Series on Charter Schools: Redefining Educational Governance: The Charter School Concept; Variations on Autonomy: Charter School Laws in the Southwestern Region;* and *Designs for School-Site Reform: Charter Schools in New Mexico and Texas.* These publications are useful references for educators, policymakers, parents, or charter school program planners who either are new to charter schools or are refining existing charter school programs. Executive summaries are available from SEDL's Web site.

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What's New at McREL.org

1. **The McREL name has changed**
   To more accurately reflect the diverse scope of our work, the McREL name has changed to Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning. You will continue to know us as McREL, and we will continue to offer high quality products and services to improve classroom instruction.

2. **McREL's Fall Conference**
   October 13-15, 1999 - Denver, Colorado
   Featuring McREL's cutting-edge research in curriculum, learning and instruction and up-to-date information about the U.S. DOE's Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program. For conference information, e-mail sblackstock@assnoffice.com or call (303)694-4728 ext 33.

3. **McREL Standards Consortium**
   McREL proudly announces the first on-site consortium to study the impact of standards and benchmarks on student achievement. Twenty-six school districts and agencies will participate in applied research studies in the areas of grading and reporting, supervision and effective instructional strategies in standards-based schools. For more information, contact Jennifer Norford (303)632-5546 or jnorford@mcrel.org.

4. **Research on Instruction**
   Complete Report or Abstracts of Studies
   A Theory-Based Meta-Analysis of Research on Instruction - McREL's synthesis of more than 100 studies of the research on instruction.

5. **McREL's Standards Survey**
   Complete Report or Executive Summary
   Press Release
   McREL worked with the Gallup Organization to survey the American public about the relative importance of the standards in the McREL database. Americans consistently rated health information and work skills high on the list of content areas that "definitely" should be included in a K-12 curriculum.

6. **McREL's Video Workshops**
   Professional development for your entire staff. Two new workshops. Each has 5 tapes - the equivalent of a multi-day training - and a complete workshop manual.
   - **Standards in the Classroom**
   - **Thinking and Reasoning in the Classroom**

McREL Microsites
Regional Educational Laboratory (REL)

Eisenhower High Plains Consortium (HPC)

Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program

Comprehensive School Mathematics Program (CSMP)

Dimensions of Learning (DOL)

McREL Shortcuts
Content Knowledge: The McREL Standards Database

Standards for Career Education

Links to Lesson Plans

Connections+

Voting Booth
This month's topic:

How useful would a hands on guide for evaluating CSRD programs be to your school/district?
1:Very
2:Somewhat
3:Moderately
4:Not At All
5:What is CSRD?

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Mission

To make a difference in the quality of education and learning for all through excellence in applied research, product development, and service. In carrying out its mission, McREL works collaboratively with its clients to improve educational policy and practice through the application of knowledge from research, development, and experience.

Key Initiatives

McREL is engaged in applied research, development, service, and dissemination initiatives designed to provide educators with the tools, strategies, and materials needed to "put the pieces of educational reform together" and to "scale up" systemic reform to encompass a broader range of diverse educational contexts and students.

Development. McREL develops knowledge synthesis and knowledge application products. Many of these products are developed in response to needs identified in McREL's long-term research sites, and are first used in those sites to promote school improvement and reform efforts. Upon completion of the development process, these materials, tools, and strategies are made available to districts and schools throughout McREL's region to "scale up" effective school improvement and reform. While many products are designed to be used as self-help tools, a number also are used by field services staff in their work with states, districts, and schools. McREL has developed a variety of standards-related products; professional development tools; materials designed to assist educators with the technical aspects of designing standards-based classrooms (aligning standards with curriculum and assessment); and tools for planning, designing, and monitoring systemic change and managing the involvement of key stakeholders as reforms are implemented.

Applied Research. McREL conducts both field-based action research with long-term research partners and applied research studies focused on critical and emerging issues in K–12 education. McREL has formed partnerships with several districts throughout its region (long-term sites) where it is implementing an innovative approach for conducting research. The Laboratory brings together a team of professional researchers with expertise in curriculum, instruction, assessment, organizational development, and motivation to work with field services staff who has expertise in change processes and staff development. McREL also conducts a variety of applied research studies, some of which focus on issues related to its specialty area (curriculum, learning, and instruction) and others that focus on emerging issues in the field. McREL's applied research includes: studies of state curriculum-based reform efforts, the implementation of state-mandated reforms at district and school levels, district strategies for supporting comprehensive school reform, factors which promote or hamper comprehensive school reform, and studies related to the adoption of standards.

Services to State and Local Education Agencies. While McREL responds to many service requests from its region, the core of Laboratory's field services initiative is the long-term partnership established with the state education agency and a local education agency in each of the region's seven states. The work conducted in these strategic service sites focuses on a wide range of issues including technical assistance for the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program, strategic planning, design of assessment systems, implementation of accreditation systems, support for a charter school start-up, and technology planning and implementation assistance. The lessons learned in these locations are documented and disseminated to other jurisdictions as part of McREL's scaling up initiative.

Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Program. McREL provides technical assistance and training to states, districts, and schools in its region to facilitate their participation in the CSRD program. Initial work included helping to create state-specific CSRD plans, assisting states' development of CSRD program proposals, working with states to develop requests for proposals from local districts and schools, providing training to local districts and schools, and disseminating information about comprehensive school reform. Continuing work includes assisting districts and schools in moving from needs assessment to comprehensive school reform model selection and program development, to implementation in the classroom, to evaluation, to program institutionalization and ongoing monitoring. McREL also is collaborating with other Laboratories on nationwide product development. In new work, the organization is launching four research studies on (1) the changes in organization infrastructure necessary to successfully implement comprehensive school reform; (2) the factors fostering institutionalization of reform programs; (3) the contextual factors that must be considered when implementing comprehensive school reform programs in jurisdictions serving Native American populations; and (4) a policy study focusing on the characteristics of funded and unfunded CSRD proposals in the region.

Partnerships. McREL is working with other federally funded programs to create, implement, and maintain a comprehensive, nationwide system providing technical assistance and information to educators and education policymakers. This system will meet the needs of state and local education agencies and of teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders across the region and nationally. Participating organizations will synchronize their efforts to provide comprehensive and accurate information, coordinated support, quick responses, and easy accessibility through a variety of entry points. Toward this end, McREL communicates regularly with staff members in other Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, Regional Technology in Education Consortia, Equity Assistance Centers, Eisenhower Math and Science Consortia, and Regional Resource and Federal Centers to create a system of ready resources and referrals.

Signature Programs

Over the past few years, McREL has been working to develop major programs that have broad application to K–12 education and that hold promise for improving the educational performance and long-term success of students across the nation.

Comprehensive School Mathematics Program (CSMP). McREL's Comprehensive School Mathematics Program provides a complete K–6 mathematics experience for students of all ability levels—actively involving students in the content and application of mathematics, not simply drilling them in arithmetic. The material is sequenced in spiral form so that students continuously encounter each content area throughout the program. CSMP presently is used in schools in over 35 states.

Dimensions of Learning. Dimensions of Learning is a framework for organizing, describing, and developing research-based teaching strategies that engage students in five basic types of thinking involved in meaningful learning. Additionally, the framework offers a way of integrating the major instructional models by showing how they are connected and where the overlaps occur. Dimensions of Learning is used in all states and abroad and has been translated into Spanish.

Literacy Plus. Literacy Plus takes a holistic, integrated approach to teaching reading, writing, vocabulary and reasoning. A Resource Guide provides teachers with over 180 strategies that are appropriate to different stages of literacy development. Literature units are available at all K–8 grade levels and are based on various genres and themes. Unique to Literacy Plus is a semantic cluster approach to vocabulary instruction. Literacy Plus is used in over 40 states.

Standards Implementation. McREL has modeled a process for using the federal investment in research to address local needs by developing products and services that assist states, districts and schools with standards implementation. Most notably, Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K–12 Education is a database of 256 standards and nearly 4,000 accompanying benchmarks created by synthesizing more than 116 documents, reports and other materials compiled by professional education organizations. In its program, Designing Standards-Based Districts, Schools, and Classrooms, a McREL consultant typically works with school or district personnel over a period of 1 to 3 years, facilitating a locally developed approach to standards-based education.

Specialty Area

McREL places a special emphasis on *Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction.* To provide national leadership in this area, McREL is building on its prior efforts to synthesize and align standards. The Laboratory is developing and disseminating resource materials, monitoring and synthesizing research literature, providing staff development sessions, sponsoring conferences and workshops, participating in regional and national forums, and developing partnerships with Education Department-funded institutions and providers nationwide. McREL makes this body of knowledge available internationally by featuring a rich array of information, products and services on its Web site.

Selected Recent Products

Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K–12 Education synthesizes and aligns 256 standards and nearly 4,000 accompanying benchmarks from over 100 national- and state-level standards documents in 14 subject areas.

What Americans Believe Students Should Know reveals interesting—and somewhat surprising—answers to the question, "What academic content does the American public think K–12 students should master?" Americans surveyed by the Gallup Organization for this McREL study consistently rated health information and work skills high on the list of content areas that "definitely" should be included in K–12 curricula. The report notes that the time required for student mastery of standards is significantly greater than is currently available within K–12 education. It suggests that decisionmakers may have to consider prioritizing academic content.

A Theory-Based Meta-Analysis of Research on Instruction analyzes and synthesizes the results of more than 100 research reports on instruction. Many of these reports involved multiple studies, and in total they represent 1.2 million subjects. The study sought to synthesize the existing instructional research, using categories specific and functional enough to provide guidance for classroom practice. The publication presents findings of the meta-analysis and discusses effective teaching strategies for each level. Finally, it describes an emerging paradigm of an expert teacher.

WestEd

IMPROVING EDUCATION THROUGH RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE

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Unprecedented social changes and technological innovations are sweeping us and our children into the 21st century. As never before, teachers, schools and their communities seek innovative strategies for transforming schools into effective enterprises for learning.

WestEd acts as a catalyst and mentor for improving schools. Working with the entire education community, WestEd offers the knowledge and support needed to equip all students, especially those most underserved, with the skills and capabilities to lead satisfying, productive lives.

WestEd Hot Topic: **LEARNING *from* ASSESSMENT**

WestEd has been selected as an External Evaluator for California's Public School Accountability Act (SB 1X). Visit our site to learn more about our process and our partners.

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Mission

To work in its capacity as a research, development, and service agency, with education and other communities, to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults.

Key Initiatives

Whole School Reform. The following four programs (the latter two of which specifically target high schools) are exemplary of WestEd's efforts to develop and disseminate better ways for schools to transform themselves into coherent, continuously improving organizations focused on student achievement:

- The Western Assessment Collaborative, a signature program, is an R&D effort to help educators use assessment as a catalyst and guide for whole school reform.
- The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program helps schools choose and implement research-based comprehensive reform models. Its first regional conference brought together representatives from newly funded schools to help them prepare for the change process. Case studies will document successful strategies.
- The Career Preparation Assessment program, now being piloted for some 3,000 students by 130 teachers at 12 schools, is a scaleable portfolio-based system that measures a set of interdisciplinary standards aligned with most high schools' student outcomes and with important standards frameworks (e.g., those in the SCANS report).
- The Talent Development Model, conceived at Johns Hopkins University, focuses on making schoolwork relevant to urban youth, holding all students to high standards, and providing multiple pathways to success. WestEd continues the model's co-development, supporting and studying implementation at three schools.

Language and Cultural Diversity (LCD). LCD aims to enhance educators' capacity to provide high quality learning opportunities to students from traditionally under-served linguistic, cultural, and racial groups. WestEd develops and disseminates strategies for culturally responsive teaching, assessment, and communication. The Laboratory's research-based framework for improved cross-cultural communication currently is being disseminated and has, for example, been incorporated into Los Angeles Unified School District's intern program. WestEd's model for supporting paraprofessionals from ethnolinguistic minority communities to become teachers also is in the dissemination stage. The Indigenous Education Collaborative applies concepts of culturally responsive education specifically to Native American, Native Alaskan and Pacific Island student populations, such as the Laboratory's work helping teachers in one Arizona district modify a state assessment task to more accurately elicit their Navajo students' capabilities.

With the recent passage of California's Proposition 227, which seeks to limit primary language instruction, LCD is coordinating a cross-program effort to meet the growing regional demand for information on how best to serve English Language Learners (ELLs). WestEd's efforts include, for example, field-based research in collaboration with school districts to improve ELL assessment, as well as redesignation criteria, measures, and processes.

State Alliance Projects. These projects develop and support consortia (including schools, districts, and institutions of higher education) to undertake high priority statewide improvement initiatives. In Arizona, the focus is on professional development around standards and assessment; in Nevada, on distance education and technology programs for rural schools; and in Utah, on results-based regional leadership development. In California, WestEd continues work with the Class-size Reduction Evaluation Research Consortium, but also is developing and supporting two networks for California's largest urban districts: one for district superintendents, focusing on peer leadership support, and one for deputy superintendents for curriculum and instruction that concentrates on standards-based practices.

Signature Programs

Math Case Methods Project. This professional development program enhances teachers' knowledge of specific mathematics topics while increasing their capacity to review and improve their own instructional practices. Group discussion of teacher-written cases—personal descriptions of classroom experiences—catalyzes examination of a range of approaches to math teaching and learning. Research and evaluation activities show that such discussions produce a significant growth in teachers' knowledge of mathematics and breadth of instruction.

The Center for Child and Family Studies is committed to improving the lives of young children by increasing the availability and quality of child care and developing effective early intervention strategies that support young children and families living in high poverty communities. Its acclaimed Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers provides intensive research-based training in how to create nurturing, emotionally supportive childcare environments. Using knowledge derived from that experience, the Center also played a key role in the conception and development of quality programs for Early Head Start and now provides training to 143 Early Head Start grantees throughout the country. The Center's Early Intervention, Care and Education Project has developed a two-pronged approach to improving the lives of young children and their families in high risk communities: direct assistance to the families through intensive case management and direct assistance to community agencies serving those families. Lessons learned are now informing home visitation models for a number of Head Start and Early Head Start agencies.

Western Assessment Collaborative (WAC). This long-term R&D effort has been carried out primarily through *Kyosei*, a partnership of 10 schools and 4 districts to whom WAC provides assistance in setting shared standards for student performance, developing systems for measuring progress, and developing the organizational capacity and culture to sustain standards-based reform. Key to this effort is the WAC's use of Accountability Dialogues, which engage the entire school community in rigorous inquiry and action focused on shared standards. Lessons emerging from *Kyosei* work inform the WAC's assistance to state departments of education, professional development providers such as California's county offices of education, and school reform networks such as the Bay Area's Annenberg Challenge grant recipient.

Specialty Area

Assessment and Accountability. WestEd's program of development, applied research, and dissemination in this area helps constituents at all levels—teachers, business and community representatives, university faculty, and policymakers—place assessment in a pivotal role in school reform. Among the critical issues the Laboratory addresses, always with an eye toward ensuring equity, are: implementing defensible high stakes, state-level assessment and accountability systems; developing effective standards- and performance-based assessment tools and systems, including

multiple measures; improving classroom assessment for both instructional and evaluation purposes; improving teacher quality through assessment and certification; and helping students make a successful transition from school to work. Our recent work in these areas includes: technical and policy assistance in Nevada's development of a high school exit exam; development of a K-12 student assessment system to support Kentucky's statewide education reform; co-development of a professional developers toolkit for improved classroom assessment; development of a certification system for teachers of English Language Learners for the California Teachers Association; and development of end of program exams for California's career-technical students.

Selected Recent Products

Groupwork in Diverse Classrooms: A Casebook for Educators (and Facilitators' Guide) includes 16 teacher-written cases that serve as a discussion catalyst and promote more thoughtful and effective teaching strategies.

Improving Classroom Assessment: A Toolkit for Professional Developers (Toolkit 98), a joint product of the Regional Laboratory Network, is a compendium of sample assessments, training activities, and student work in response to requests for assistance in this area.

Can State Intervention Spur Academic Turn-around? is a knowledge brief on frameworks and effects of state intervention with low-performing schools. *Standards: From Document to Dialogue* is a guidebook with exercises to advance the mental model of standards as a dialogue to define and work toward quality education.

Improving Student Achievement by Extending School? Is it Just a Matter of Time? is a synthesis of the research on the relationship between time spent in school and student learning.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND ADULTS

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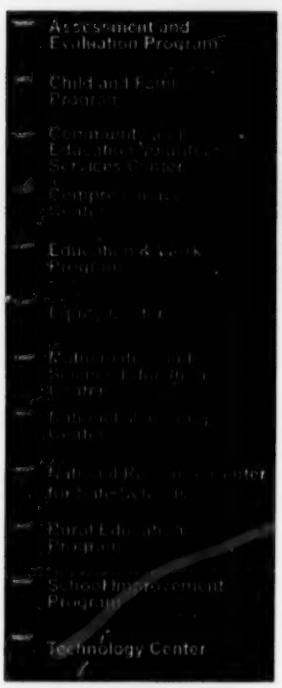

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En español

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's mission is to improve educational results for children, youth, and adults by providing research and development assistance in delivering equitable, high-quality educational programs. NWREL provides research and development assistance to education, government, community agencies, business, and labor. NWREL's primary service area is the Northwest states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.

Resource Links:

- Education Service Providers in the Northwest
- Regional Educational Laboratory Network
- U.S. Department of Education
- Office of Educational Research and Improvement

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Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL)

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Mission

To improve educational results for children, youth, and adults by providing research and development assistance in delivering equitable, high quality educational programs. NWREL provides research and development assistance to education, government, community agencies, business, and labor.

Key Initiatives

NWREL focuses on comprehensive school improvement strategies, building on its solid, long-term relationships with schools and communities in the Northwest region. Development efforts are concentrated at school-community partnership sites that serve high concentrations of economically disadvantaged children in both urban and rural areas. NWREL provides a broad array of information and assistance services to educators, policymakers, and the public to support widespread educational improvement efforts across the Northwest region. Key initiatives are:

Assessment and Evaluation. NWREL is developing the Information Planner, a comprehensive system to identify, define, manage, interpret, and report educational information as a cohesive set of school and community indicators, with related resources, training, and technical assistance to support implementation and maintenance. In the area of classroom assessment, NWREL is concentrating on research, development, and training in trait-based assessment and teaching.

Early Childhood Education. NWREL is developing processes and resources for schools to establish classroom environments that are developmentally and culturally appropriate for young children. NWREL also has developed a self-study process, resource materials, and training to assist teams from schools and local community agencies in planning and improving comprehensive services for children and families.

Rural Education. NWREL is developing a school-community renewal process and related tools to enable members of rural communities to carry out school improvement efforts they plan and implement themselves.

School Improvement. NWREL is developing strategies and tools to enable school/district/community systems to change their school culture so that all students achieve high standards consistent with what their communities value. Major components are the Onward to Excellence II school improvement process (see below) and the curriculum inquiry and improvement model for school teams to examine current practice, clarify standards and local priorities, plan learning experiences, and conduct classroom research.

Community-based Learning. NWREL's work focuses on helping education and community partners improve learning activities they create for both students and teachers through such vehicles as school-to-work transition, service learning, cooperative education, work experience, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Mathematics and Science Education. NWREL is developing and disseminating resources from "real-life" examples of effective science and mathematics materials and practices.

Signature Works

Trait-based Assessment and Instruction. NWREL's trait-based assessment and instruction models identify critical traits of effective writers, readers, oral communicators, and mathematical problemsolvers. The traits provide the targets for assessing competency in these areas and provide an effective way for teachers to organize their curriculum and instruction. Rubrics for scoring products of student work are accompanied with practical and useful resources for teachers.

Onward to Excellence II. The Onward to Excellence II (OTE) school reform model includes processes and activities for: (1) direction setting, (2) planning action, (3) taking action, and (4) maintaining momentum. The model integrates school and district-level change processes resulting from 17 years of research, development, and implementation. Currently, OTE is being utilized in the field in four variations: (1) as a full systemic improvement system; (2) as a targeted school-level process; (3) as a support in the implementation of the Montana Performance Based Accreditation Process; and (4) in Alaska Onward to Excellence.

Specialty Area

School Change Processes. NWREL's work focuses on learning more about and improving the processes for changing schools to enable all students to achieve high standards. NWREL is:

- Convening groups—practitioners, policymakers, assistance providers, researchers, program leaders, community representatives, and others—to increase the focus on student learning and find common ground related to school change processes;
- Synthesizing data and information—status, trends, policies and emerging results—for use throughout the nation;
- Establishing networks of people with common problems, issues, and activities to support one another in school change efforts; and
- Informing networks with experiential and research-based knowledge to stimulate thinking and action.

In addition to NWREL's School Improvement Conference focused on the topic of transforming low-performing schools, the Laboratory has conducted three annual national forums on school reform in collaboration with the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

The 10 regional laboratories, through the School Change Collaborative, are developing new resources, including self-study resources such as Data-in-a-Day, and materials to support the formation of learning communities.

Selected Recent Products

Journey of a Reader. The teacher training and resource materials use a six-trait model for assessing and teaching reading. These six discrete skill areas, or traits that good readers demonstrate, include: (1) decoding conventions; (2) establishing comprehension; (3) realizing context; (4) developing interpretation; (5) integrating for synthesis; and (6) critiquing for evaluation. The

materials include a video-based teacher professional development package, 200-page resource book of K-12 assessment tasks and tools, and a classroom poster.

It's Just Good Teaching. Concepts of good teaching in mathematics and science are presented in a series of publications and professional development videos including examples from classrooms. This series focuses on aspects of equity, standards, assessment strategies, family involvement, and technology. The two videos introduce parents to ongoing changes in middle school mathematics education and inquiry-based science teaching.

Lifelong Learning. A series of five booklets is designed to help parents, students, and teachers build the skills and attitudes lifelong learners need, both in and out of the classroom. Three of the booklets are aimed at parents and recommend out-of-school activities that can help students build the communication, studying, research, and thinking skills needed for lifelong learning. The fourth booklet is targeted to high school students, and the fifth—aimed at educators—identifies research findings and provides research-based recommendations for classroom activities.

PACIFIC RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

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ABOUT PREL | PREL PROGRAMS | PUBLICATIONS | WHAT'S NEW

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) is a nonprofit corporation that serves the U.S. in the Pacific region. **PREL** helps Pacific schools improve educational outcomes for children, youth, and adults by providing research, development opportunities, training, technical assistance, group facilitation, information resource activities, dissemination, and evaluation services.

PACIFIC REGION | LINKS TO OTHER REGIONAL LABORATORIES | LINKS TO OTHER EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

If you have any questions about **PREL** or our Web Site, please send a message to

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Mission

To assist education, government, community agencies, businesses, and labor groups to maintain cultural literacy and improve the quality of life by helping to strengthen educational programs and processes for children, youth, and adults.

Key Initiatives

PREL's key initiatives are aligned with its goals and priorities:

Strengthening Teaching and Learning. PREL is providing technical assistance and training to teachers and administrators on curricula and practice, technology applications, and development and dissemination of tools and strategies to strengthen teaching and learning. With PREL's assistance, the Republic of Palau established content standards and benchmarks for language arts and social studies.

Transforming Schools and Other Learning Environments. PREL helped to launch the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program in its eligible entities of Hawaii, Guam, CNMI, and American Samoa. PREL also finds ways to ensure that other entities will benefit from nationwide work on comprehensive school reform through research-based models. An example of comprehensive school reform is the Al Maron project in Ebeye Public School described under Signature Programs.

Fostering Partnerships and Connections. PREL's work strategy has been to plan with people, not for them, and to foster partnerships and networks. Examples of these partnerships include leadership teams and conferences and institutes that are described under signature programs. A region-wide network of service centers has been established in CNMI, Guam, American Samoa, and Yap State to ensure frequent and sustained interaction among PREL and its constituencies.

Addressing Literacy as a Priority. The development of literacy in children and adults is PREL's most pressing priority. PREL is implementing the Reading Success Network (RSN), a national initiative developed by the Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center, to support reading instruction in grades K-3. PREL also is implementing the Strategic Teaching and Reading Project (STRP) developed by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Several materials and

products have been created to support literacy while maintaining cultural values and indigenous languages of the Pacific region: student-developed CD-ROMs in Yap State; stories written by Pacific teachers; a CD-ROM that archives a set of more than 1,500 stories/titles in 10 Pacific languages; and a Read Aloud audiotape series in various Pacific languages.

Signature Programs

Pacific Educator in Residence (PEIR) Program. This program provides a structured professional development experience for qualified Pacific educators during a year's residency at any one of PREL's office sites. Its purpose is to develop Pacific educators' personal and professional skills in the context of PREL's ongoing work, thereby enhancing PREL's strategic alliances in the region. As part of their program of work, PEIRs identify how they will apply their new knowledge and experiences within their respective educational systems. Approximately 33 PEIRs have gone through the program over the past 12 years.

Leadership Teams. The Pacific Curriculum and Instructional Council (PCIC) serves as one of PREL's leadership teams. This Council is made up of curriculum chiefs or their representatives from each entity served by PREL. Results of their work include a cultural profile framework, identification of priority areas for technical assistance and training, and a plan for integrated services for each entity.

PREL's Research and Development Cadre has provided leadership in research studies conducted in the region. The Retention and Attrition of Pacific School Teachers and Administrators study was designed to provide insights into absenteeism, stress/burnout, and attrition among teachers and school administrators throughout the Pacific region. Work currently is under way on the Pacific Language Use in Schools (PLUS) study.

Pacific Educators' Conference. PREL annually convenes a Pacific Educators' Conference in cooperation with the region's educational community. The largest gathering of Pacific educators in the region, the Pacific Educators' Conference has an average attendance of 1,000 participants. In recent years, Pacific Islanders have been presenters in about 90 percent of the more than 120 workshops. Pre-conference institutes have grown from 1 institute with 25 participants to 7 institutes with over 250 registered participants.

Project Al Maron. In January 1997, Project Al Maron (community members coming together) was born out of a need to address multiple facilities, curricular, and staff development needs. In this spirit, the government and Ebeye Board of Education invited PREL to become a key partner in the transformation of Ebeye Public School. PREL's role has been to provide training and technical assistance for school improvement; conduct needs assessments; assist in further development of the school improvement plan; and coordinate time and resource contributions to ensure that everyone plays an active role. Improved facilities and student learning environment, greater community involvement, and stronger accountability have resulted from this partnership.

Specialty Area

As one of the three laboratories assigned the specialty area of *Language and Cultural Diversity*, PREL provides regional and national leadership in: (1) language use and student literacy, and (2) culturally inclusive staff development practices. Through publications, conference institutes, region-wide classroom research, teacher training, and a satellite teleconference, PREL's specialty area supports educators in their efforts to improve instruction and student learning. Staff developers use research-based practices for improving literacy among second language learners through an inclusive model for training, targeted to apply effective staff development practices in culturally appropriate ways.

Selected Recent Products

Pacific Interactive CD-ROM provides a framework that allows teachers or students to access subject area content in various media forms and then use the 'option-click' command to create beautiful, full-featured multimedia reports or presentations.

Reading Aloud to Children is a series of bilingual audiotapes and guides that encourage parents and other caregivers to read together with their children, both in their first language and in English. The tapes explain the importance of reading aloud in the development of literacy, provide specific read-aloud techniques, and demonstrate those techniques using a story or legend native to the language being featured. *Reading Aloud to Children* has been produced in English and Hawaiian, Marshallese, Pohnpeian, Samoan, Woleaian, Yapese, Chuukese, and Palauan. Versions in Kosraean, Chamorro, Carolinian, and Ilocano are expected to be completed in 1999.

Retention and Attrition of Pacific School Teachers and Administrators (RAPSTA) Study in the Pacific Region. PREL has completed a set of entity-specific studies on teacher and school-administrator absenteeism, stress, and attrition in each of PREL's 10 American-affiliated entities. These studies were done in collaboration with other entities to (1) raise awareness of risk factors affecting educators in the Pacific, and (2) provide insight for addressing concerns related to absenteeism, stress, and attrition in Pacific schools.

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REL Headline News

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- Companion Pieces on Standards, Diversity, and Equity Available From LAB at Brown
- Educational Materials in Pacific Languages Soon Available on CD-ROM
- Help Wanted: Outstanding Principals — Who and Where Are They?
- McREL Developing Workshops on Research Into Practice Series
- ParenTech Helps Parents Get a Grip on Technology
- *QUILT Video Journal* Demonstrates Questioning and Understanding Techniques
- SEDL and Voyage of Discovery Project to Get Rural Schools Online
- SERVE Sets School-Improvement Forum for October in Atlanta

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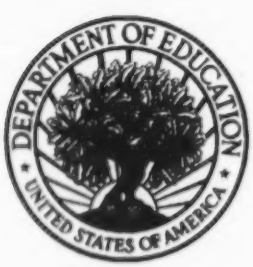

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